

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3604

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 5884

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, RP

SUBJECT: EXCESS T-28D AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 103967

1. I WAS ASTONISHED AND DISMAYED TO RECEIVE REFTEL QUESTIONING, AT THIS LATE DATE, THE DESIRABILITY OF FURNISHING T-28D AIRCRAFT TO THE PHILIPPINES. MY ASTONISHMENT RESULTS FROM FACT THIS MATTER DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS WITH EVERYONE WHO I THOUGHT HAD AN INTEREST IN IT. THOSE CONSULTATIONS PRODUCED A VERY HELPFUL VISIT LAST WEEK FROM A TEAM OF DEFENSE SPECIALISTS ON THE AIRCRAFT, WHO ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT IN MOST POSITIVE TERMS.

2. THE T-28 IS A USEFUL CLOSE SUPPORT AIRCRAFT WHICH CAN PERFORM IN A TACTICAL MODE WITH INFANTRY IN A RELATIVELY BENIGN AIR ENVIRONMENT. TO SAY IT IS USEFUL "ONLY FOR COUNTER-INSURGENCY PURPOSES" IS TO ERECT A TENDENTIOUS STRAW MAN FOR SEMATIC REASONS WHICH FRANKLY ESCAPE ME. IT IS TRUE THAT THE MOST LIKELY MILITARY USE FOR THE AIRCRAFT IN

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THE PHILIPPINES WILL BE AGAINST INSURGENTS EITHER OF THE

MUSLIM SECESSIONIST OR MAOIST VARIETIES, BUT THAT FACT IS TRUE OF EVERY ITEM OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WE PROVIDE THIS COUNTRY, WHETHER IT IS A BULLET OR A BOLO.

3. MOREOVER, IN THE PHILIPPINE PARA, IN SECTION I, UNDER BASIC U.S. POLICIES, PARAGRAPH (3) EXPLICITLY ENJOINS US TO "TAILOR OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE TOWARD PHILIPPINE INTERNAL SECURITY, RATHER THAN TOWARD A SIGNIFICANT PHILIPPINE CAPABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL AGGRESSION." THEREFORE, I CAN NOT RPT NOT, FOR THE LIFE OF ME, UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE OBJECTION BEING BELATEDLY RAISED BY REFTEL.

4. THE CONCERN EXPRESSED IN PARA 2 REFTEL ABOUT MANNER IN WHICH PRESS AND OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES WILL INTERPRET THE PROVISION OF T-28 AIRCRAFT IS, IN MY JUDGMENT, A FUNCTION OF THE MANNER IN WHICH WE HANDLE THE PROVISION. I SEE NO RPT NO NEED TO MANAGE THE EVENT WITH GREAT FANFARE. IN FACT, IT WOULD BE MY PREFERENCE TO FLY THE AIRCRAFT HERE IN BATCHES OF FIVE OR SIX, WITH PHILIPPINE INSIGNIA ALREADY PAINTED ON THEM, AND TO LAND THEM AT SOME INCONSPICUOUS BASE SUCH AS BASA, FOR DELIVERY TO THE PAF. THERE NEED BE NO RPT NO CEREMONIES ATTENDANT ON THE DELIVERY, AND, SINCE PAF ALREADY HAS T-28'S IN ITS INVENTORY, THERE NEED BE NO RPT NO CONSPICUOUS STIR. IF FACT OF DELIVERY BECOMES KNOWN, WE CAN CONFIRM THAT WE HAVE "PROVIDED A FEW MORE T-28 AIRCRAFT TO THE PAF UNDER OUR MAP PROGRAM."

5. I AM DISMAYED BY RECEIPT OF THIS CABLE BECAUSE, ON DEPARTURE DEFENSE TEAM LAST WEEK, I HAD AUTHORIZED CHIEF JUSMAG TO DISCUSS THE T-28 DIRECTLY WITH HIS PHILIPPINE COUNTERPARTS. MOREOVER, I HAD TOLD PRESIDENT MARCOS THAT SUCH DISCUSSIONS WERE ABOUT TO BEGIN. THE HAVE, INDEED, BEGUN AND MATTER HAS BEEN RAISED TO HIGHEST LEVELS IN

PHILIPPINE ARMED SERVICES.

6. CONSEQUENTLY, I FEEL I AM "COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT" ON THIS QUESTION, AT LEAST AS FAR AS U.S. GOOD FAITH IS CONCERNED, AND WOULD REGARD IT AS CONFIDENTIAL

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UNCONSCIONABLE FOR U.S. TO RENEGE AT THIS STAGE ON GROUNDS SET FORTH REFTEL.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ASSURE ME IMMEDIATELY THAT OBJECTIONS TO PROVISION OF T-28D AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN AND THAT ONE SQUADRON WILL BE AUTHORIZED SOONEST FROM THOSE ASSETS ASSIGNED TO WATERPUMP IN UDORN AND BY DOWNWARD REVISION OF LAOS USE, AS PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED BY JUSMAG.

SULLIVAN

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